Secta. II-27—100,000—21-6-48.

Revenue (1948) Department.

SERIES.

G.O. No. 2245

Dated 20 9 48

[Despatch Abstract.]

llage Establishments - Retrenchment - Clubbing of small villages -

eduction in the number of village servants - Proposal dropped - Papers

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

NOTE FOR THE CABINET

Village establishments - Retrenchment - Clubbing of small villages - Reduction in the number of village servants - Proposals -

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In 1946, the Cabinet Salaries Committee recommended that the Government should consider the question of replacing the present system of village establishments by a more efficient and economic one. The Finance (Reorganisation) Department took up the question and framed a scheme, under which the duties of karnam and village headman would be combined in one office, which would be filled by a person with superior educational qualifications, who would be a whole-time Government servant on a pay in the scale of Rs.25-1-40 or Rs.30-1-50 and a dearness allowance of Rs.16/- per mensem, with no leave and pensionary benefits and having chances of promotion as clerk in a revenue office, mainly taluk office. He would be allowed only one village servant, who would be appointed and paid as under the existing system. The officer would also be given an imprest, to enable him to employ coolies on occasions when the single village servant could not cope with the work. The scheme was referred to the Board of Revenue for remarks.

2. The Board objected to the scheme on the following grounds:-

(1) The land revenue system of Madras, with the system of village administration through the village officers, has been in existence for centuries and has stood the test of [illegible] and has proved its use in procurement work.

(2) The retrenched village officers may come under the influence of communists and there may be trouble for the Government.

(3) Except in a few small villages, it will be impossible for one village officer to do the work of two village officers and there is also the danger that the proposed amalgamation of the two posts may result in fraud and misappropriation of Government money.

(4) In the districts where the hereditary system has been in vogue, the relationship between the village officers and the villagers is more cordial than in districts in which the hereditary system is not in force and such a cordial relationship creates an atmosphere conducive to the smooth working of the village administration.

(5) There would be no appreciable economy if the scheme is given effect to, and it would be false economy to entrust the interests of villagers to the tender mercies of a careerist who has no root in the village and really no stake in its welfare.

3. This Department, while observing that some of the reasons given by the Board were entitled to considerable weight, held that, in view of the radical changes in the existing system of Land Revenue administration under contemplation, the question of re-organizing the age-old system of village establishments should be postponed for consideration at a furture date.

4. At the meeting of the Re-organisation Committee held on 18-10-1947, the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. T.A. Ramalingam Chettiar, suggested another scheme, under which one senior Revenue Inspector on a pay of Rs.75/- and a clerk on Rs.45/- or Rs.50/- with a dearness allowance of Rs.18/- per mensem each, belonging to the regular staff of the Revenue Department, with pensionary and other rights, would be in-charge of a number of villages corresponding to two or three of the existing headman's or Karnam's groups and would discharge all the duties of the present village officers, doing azmoish and other outdoor work by turns, so that one of them would always be available at the headquarters village for

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receiving reports on crimes, if any, and generally to give any help which the ryots may require of him. There would be one servant for each village and one more to accompany the officers on their tours and the conditions of service of the servants would be the same as those of the present village servants.

5. The scheme was referred to 3 officers for their personal opinion, viz., Mr. M. V. Subramaniam (Secretary, E & P.H. Department), Mr. S. Venkateswaran, (Collector of Chingleput) and Mr. G. Venkateswara Ayyar the Revenue Secretary. Mr. Subramaniam emphasized the necessity of having an officer of some local standing with an intimate knowledge of the village and its accounts the evils of "non-residence". Mr. S. Venkateswaran practically proposed a scheme of his own with two officers for a group of villages, the work being divided on a functional basis corresponding to the duties now performed by Headmen and Karnams respectively and a large number of menials somewhat corresponding to peons but without pensionary benefits. The Revenue Secretary stated that his personal opinion was that the unit of revenue administration should be made to coincide with that of local administration. He therefore suggested that the future of the land revenue system and the pattern of local self-Government should be awaited.

6. The matter was considered by the Reorganisation Committee on 7-1-1948. The Committee felt that a change in the system of village establishments was necessary, for the reasons (1) that the accounts prepared by the present village officers were not reliable, (2) that the village officers took part in politics at the xpense of efficiency and (3) that their demands for higher salaries, in view of the all-round increase of salaries, could not be met owing to the enormous size of the present village establishments. The Committee agreed with the view expressed b the Revenue Secretary that the unit of Revenue Administration should coincide with the unit of loeal administration. They however, did not come to any definite conclusion, but suggested two more schemes for trial in a non-hereditary area, namely:-

(1) Three or four villages to be grouped together and two lower division clerks to be appointed to do the work of both the karnam and the village headman. They should serve in the village for three years and be eligible for promotion. They should be located in the central villages of the group and the group should be somconstituted that no point in it would be more than 5 miles from the office. The number of village servants should be reduced to the barest minimum. The posts of Revenue Inspectors would be unnecessary.

(2) The Karnam to continue as at present,, but in the place of the headman working in a Panchayat area, an officer of the grade of a lower division clerk to be appointed to collect all the dues to the Government as well as the taxes due to the Panchayat, the Panchayat contributing on a percentage basis for his services. He should perform the other duties of a village headman also. The number of village servants should be reduced to the barest minimum. In this case also, the ordinary Revenue Inspector would be relieved of his duties with reference to collection of revenue, so that the number of Revenue Inspectors could be reduced.

The Committee also suggested that the feasibility of abolishing the hereditary right to village offices might be examined by the Government as, if one of the scheme was adopted , the hereditary right should go.

7. It was pointed out that radical changes in the Land Revenue system were under contemplation and that the pattern of Local Administration for the villages had not yet been decided and it was suggested that the question of re-

re-organizing the present system of village establishments might wait. As regards the abolition of the hereditary right to village offices, it was mentioned that the question was considered in the past and dropped.

8. The file was circulated to H.M.(L.R.) and H.M.(Finance). It was ordered in circulation that the matter should wait till a decision was reached on the future land revenue syste The papers were accordingly recorded after perusal by Fin.(Re-org.) Department.

9. The Retrenchment and Reorganisation Committee have now revived the question. The Committee consider that a radical change in the system of village administration is not advisable at present. They, however, think that retrenchment is possible in the following two ways:

(i) Clubbing of adjacent small villages having a beriz of less than Rs.1500/- each and thereby reducing the number of villages and

(ii) Reducing the number of village servants in most of the villages by one.

10. Suggestion (i) - Clubbing of adjacent small villages having a beriz of less than Rs.1500 each.

The suggestion is not a new one. After the Great War of 1914-18, when the pay of village officers and servants had to be increased and the Government had need to effect economies in expenditure, they amalgamated many villages and abolished many village offices. In 1924, the Legislative Council opposed this policy of amalgmation vehemently on the following grounds:-

(a) In the interests of the Government, the village machinery should so function as to have intimate knowledge of the jurisdiction. This is not possible in large villages.

(b) There is no more fertile source of corruption than the work of regrouping. Every temptation is put in the way of officers, who have to recommend the retention of on out of two men, to accept some return for their recommendation.

(c) Politically, every man turned out of the post is a potential centre of discontent.

(d) Grouping destroys the village individuality and the village ceases to be a unit, e.g. for executing kudimaramath.

(e) Most of the villagers are illiterate and depend on the village officers for help in many transactions. To expect a villager to walk six miles, on the off-chance of seeing a karnam at his house and finding him at leisure to listen to his business, is hard.

(f) In several districts, all regrouping necessary and permissible in the interests of Administration has already been effected.

(g) Whole villages are left without any Government officer to take charge of Government property.

It was realised that the adoption of the policy of amalgamation of villages was an administrative mistake. The Madras Village Officers Restoration Act was therefore passed in 1926, the grouped villages were redivided and the abolished village offices were restored.

In 1931-32, the Retrenchment Committee examined the question of reduction of village establishments and came to the conclusion that no reduction was possible. /p.to.

In 1936, in connnexion with a comprehensive survey to see what could be done by way of economy in Government expenditure, the question of reduction of village establishments was also examined. The Board of Revenue expressed the view that clubbing of small villages would lead to discontent and apprehension which would not be confined to the village officers immediately concerned. The Government accepted the view.

The Retrnechment and Re-organisation Committee have now suggested clubbing of adjacent small villages having a beriz of less than Rs.1500 each in order to abolish some village offices. The Committee consider that there may be 1,000 villages for clubbing.

The several objections raised in 1924 against the grouping of villages and the first three objections raised by the Board of Revenue to a previous scheme of the Retrenchment and Re-organisation Committee and referred to in paragraph 2 of this note, seem to be applicable to the present suggestion of the Committee. The adoption of the suggestion may lead to agitation as before. This Department is, therefore, of the view that the suggestion need not be pursued. The Finance Dept. agrees that the consideration of the suggestion may be postponed pending the re-organisation of the system of village establishments, after the Land Revenue Policy has been decided.

11. SUGGESTION (ii) - REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF VILLAGE SERVANTS IN MOST OF THE VILLAGES BY ONE.

At present the number of vettis in a village is determined with reference to the beriz of the village and the number of talayaris with reference to the population of the village, as follows:-

RYOTWARI AREAS.

	Grades of beriz.	No. to be employe
Vettis.	Under Rs.2,000/-	1
	Between Rs.2,000/- and 8,000/-	2
	Between Rs.8000/- and Rs.16,000/-	3
	Rs.16,000/- and upwards ..	4
	POPULATION.	
Talayaris	For groups having a population between 200 and 1,500.	1
	or groups having a population between 1500 and 4,500.	2
	or groups having a population of 4,500 and above.	3.

Proprietary areas.

Talayaris	Population.	No. to be employed.
	For groups having a population between 200 and 1,500.	1
	For groups having a population between 1,500 and 3,000.	2
	For groups having a population of 4,500 and above.	3
	For groups having a population of ~~3,000 and above=4,500~~ of 4,500 and above	3 4
Vettis	Appointed with reference to the irrigation revenue of the village	contd:-

In 1920, the Salaries Committee made a similar suggestion. Some posts of village servants were abolished in the next three or four years. In 1941-32, the Retrenchment Committee held that no reduction of village establishments was possible. In 1936-37 representations were made that village servants were mostly used by the village officers for their private work and it was, therefore, possible to effect a reduction in the number of village servants. The Board of Revenue, which was consulted, stated that, as village servants were part-time Government servants, it did not matter whether in their spare time they worked for the village officers or for other ryots. The Government did not leave the matter at that but put the following specific suggestions to the Board:-

(a) The scale of appointment of vettis may be based on the number of pattas which is probably a better criterion of the difficulties of collectio than the beriz of the village.

(b) As talayaris and vettis do the same work, the number of talayaris required for a village may be determined with reference to the number of vettis in the village.

(c) The standards prescribed for the employment of village servants may be revised and the stages expanded to give some reduction of staff.

The majority of the Collectors, whom the Board consulted, held the view that, after the standards for the employment of village establishments were prescribed, there was a large increase in the number of Administrative posts with a corresponding increase in the number of visits of officers to villages with the result that the strength of thevillage establishments was the bare minimum compatible with efficiency. The Board agreed with the view. As regards the suggestion that the scale of appointment of vettis should be based on the number of pattas, the Board pointed out that the number of pattas was not a good criterion of work as there were many joint pattas, cases of joint enjoyment without registry, cases of persons owning more than one patta and cases of sivaijamadars and of persons paying tree-tax or holding minor inams who were not regarded as pattadars. The Board also pointed out that the number of pattas would vary from year to year and, if taken as the basis for employment of vettis, village establishments would have to be revised at frequent intervals. It also stated that important hamlets as the extent of the village, the number of hamlets, the distance from the treasury, communication facilities, etc should be taken into account in assessing the amount of work. In these circumstances, the Board held that the beriz was a far better criterion than the number of pattas, for assessing the work of the vettis.

On the Board's report, the then Revenue Secretary Mr. Holdsworth noted as follows:-

"The Board and the majority of Collectors and the D.S.Ps. are opposed to any reduction of the village menials. This was only to be expected and it is impossible to prove by argument that the Board is wrong.

In such matters there is only one way to secure economy and that is to decide on a definite reduction which must be effected and to risk a possible adverse reaction of efficiency.

The present is perhaps not thetime to make any such imposed economy. It is not known what ultimate effects the projected legislation regarding Estates will have on the village organisation of the Presidency and the land revenue policy in ayan areas is also still to be decided. The proposals in this file may be dropped."

His view was accepted by the Government and the proposals were dropped.

m Since then, conditions have not changed, except that the work of village establishments has increased further due to the due to the policy of procurement. The abolition of zamindaris and to conversion into ryotwari is expected to take place soon and after that the Government may take up the questionof ∉ reform of the Ryotwari System. In the circumstances, this Dept. holds the view that the time is not opportune to effect any reduction in the number of village servants. Finance Dept. agrees that the suggestion may be considered along with the question of the reorganisation of village establishments, after the Land Revenue Policy has been decided. | B

12. The Retrenchment and Reorganisation Committee have also suggested that their previous proposals referred to at X in para 6 of this note may also be tried in a firka or so. It has already been decided that the proposals should wait till a decision was reached on the Land Revenue Policy of the Government. The decision may stand. | C

13. The proposals at A, B and C are for orders.

xx x.
26.6.48.

To
His Excellency the Governor.
All Hon. Ministers.
The Chief Secretary,
Finance Secretary.
Public Special Special.

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Meeting of the Council of Ministers held at Fort St. George, on Monday the 30th August 1948.

The Hon'ble the Premier Presided.

PRESENT:- The Hon'ble Dr. T.S.S.Rajan.
" Sri T. S. Avinashilingam.
" Dr. S. Guruprasatham.
" Sri A.B.Shetty.
" Sri B. Gopala Reddi.
" Sri V. Kurmayya.
" Sri H. Sitarama Reddi.
" Sri K. Chandramouli.
" Sri Kala Venkata Rao.
" Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam.
" Sri K. Madhava Menon.

Agenda.

3. Village Establishments - Retrenchment - Clubbing of small villages - Reduction in the number of village servants.

ORDER:-

Proposals may be dropped.

O.P.Ramaswamy Reddy,
1-9-48.

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To
U.S.

Please see the decision of the cabinet on the recommendations of the R & R. Committee on p.11 c.f.

Fin.(Recorg.) may see and after that dept. has been the papers may be recorded for facility of future reference.

xxx

10-9-48.

Fin.(Reorg.)

FIN. (E.II)

The Cabinet has decided that the proposals should be dropped - p.11 c.f. The case may be returned to Rev. after perusal.

xxx

14-9-48.

To U.S.

The papers may now be

G.O.MS.No.2245 dated 20-9-1948.

RECORDED.

C.S.R.
17-9

Abstract:-

Village Establishments - Retrenchment - Clubbing of small villages - Reduction in the number of village servants - Proposals dropped - Papers recorded.

/True Copy/

Office Assistant,

Madras Record Office.

24/6/54.